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TAGS: PREL PHUM KPKO MOPS FUN SO IT

SUBJECT: ITALY DRIVING EU SOMALIA ENGAGEMENT, WILL HELP
AMISOM

REF: A. STATE 17083

1B. ROME 375

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Anna M. Borg for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. DCM delivered Ref A demarche to Italian MFA Director General for Sub-Saharan Africa Armando Sanguini February 22, urging immediate GOI support for deployment of an African Union stabilization force for Somalia (AMISOM). Sanguini noted Italy had already made a contribution through the EU's African Peace Facility and that the GOI has been the driving force behind EU involvement in Somalia. Italy also aimed to provide support for AMISOM bilaterally, according to Sanguini, but larger domestic problems in Italy's governing center-left coalition (Ref B) could affect timing and approval of the foreign missions bill, which would provide funding. Although Italy strongly supported AMISOM as one of the pillars to create conditions for the rebirth of Somalia, Sanguini stressed the GOI also wanted a coherent way forward on the political process--security forces alone were not the answer. End summary.

12. (C) DCM and Poloff met with Sanguini and MFA Somalia Coordinator Giancarlo Izzo February 22 to highlight the importance of providing assistance quickly to an AU force for Somalia. Sanguini responded that the EU had already committed approximately 15 million euros through the African Peace Facility, and that much of the EU's support for Somalia was due to Italy's leadership on the issue in Brussels. FM Massimo D'Alema was committed to pushing for EU assistance for AMISOM, Sanguini said. Italy sees AMISOM as a key pillar to improving the situation in Somalia.

13. (C) On the structure of AMISOM, Sanguini noted that Italy viewed AU involvement as positive, allowing Africans to have ownership of their regional problem. The GOI also supported UN endorsement of the mission and voted in favor of the recently passed UNSCR authorizing AMISOM. However, Sanguini pointed out Italy had not co-sponsored the resolution because, although the GOI was happy with the final result, the language did not go far enough to link the peacekeeping operation and the political process. Italy felt the political process and security forces were equal pillars and a PKO alone would not bring stability to Somalia. Potential troop-contributing countries did not know what they would find in Somalia and this was increasing the difficulty in securing troops. It was important that Ethiopian troops leave Somalia, Sanguini stressed. AMISOM should not be identified with the current Ethiopian involvement.

¶4. (C) Stressing that Italy has always supported Somalia's transitional process and the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), Sanguini noted that the TFIs must also do their part. The GOI had been supportive of President Yusuf's announcement that he wanted to support democracy--he and PM Gedi needed to hold up their end. Italy did not want to provide assistance and have nothing to show for it in the end; a coherent way forward on the political process was key. While civil society was slowly starting to develop, Sanguini worried that some clans were refusing to take part in the reconciliation process. Italy believed there should be a focus on schools, providing food and other basic needs.

¶5. (C) Sanguini said he would request a meeting of the Contact Group to take place in Cairo within the next few weeks.

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